



STEPHEN STRANGE was a preeminent surgeon until a car accident damaged the nerves in his hands. His ego drove him to scour the globe for a miracle cure, but instead he found a mysterious wizard called the ANCIENT ONE who taught him magic and that there are things in this world bigger than himself. These lessons led Stephen to become the Sorcerer Supreme, Earth's first defense against all manner of magical threats. His patients call him...

# DOCTOR STRANGE

With the state of magic almost all destroyed by the EMPIRIKUL, Doctor Strange is at his weakest. Relying on a few mystical weapons and even fewer spells, Stephen was forced to confront his old adversary, a fully-powered Baron Mordo. But before Mordo could finish him off, Stephen found himself teleported to the realm of another nemesis...NIGHTMARE.

## BLOOD IN THE AETHER

### CHAPTER TWO: NIGHT OF FOUR BILLION NIGHTMARES

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THERE ARE 60,000 MILES OF BLOOD VESSELS IN THE AVERAGE HUMAN BODY. ENOUGH TO CIRCLE THE GLOBE TWO TIMES OVER.

THERE ARE 640 SKELETAL MUSCLES, FORTY-FIVE MILES OF NERVES, TWENTY-FIVE FEET OF INTESTINES, FIVE VITAL ORGANS.

ALL OF IT TANGLED TOGETHER IN A DENSELY ELABORATE MAZE UNDERNEATH YOUR SKIN.

AND IF I SO MUCH AS NICK THE WRONG PART OF THAT MAZE... YOU WILL DIE.

MAKING THE INCISION.

YET I NAVIGATE THAT LABYRINTH MULTIPLE TIMES EVERY WEEK.

AND I'VE NEVER ONCE FAILED TO DETERMINE THE CORRECT OPERATIVE LOCATION, AND MAKE THE INCISION THAT SAVES YOUR LIFE INSTEAD OF ENDS IT.

I PUT MY PANTS ON THE SAME AS ANYONE. EXCEPT ONCE THEY'RE ON...I CUT PEOPLE OPEN AND READ THEIR INSIDES THE WAY OTHERS READ A BOOK.

I'M DOCTOR STEPHEN STRANGE, THE WORLD'S GREATEST SURGEON.

AND THIS IS WHAT I WAS BORN TO DO.





HRM.  
THERE'S NOTHING UNDER THE BED.



WHU--?

UNDER THE BED. I'VE BEEN WATCHING ALL NIGHT. THERE'S NOTHING THERE.

IS THERE SUPPOSED TO BE?

THERE ARE STORIES ABOUT THAT, RIGHT? I FEEL LIKE I'VE HEARD STORIES ABOUT THAT.

ABOUT... SCARY THINGS THAT LIVE UNDER THE BED. THAT ONLY COME OUT AT NIGHT.

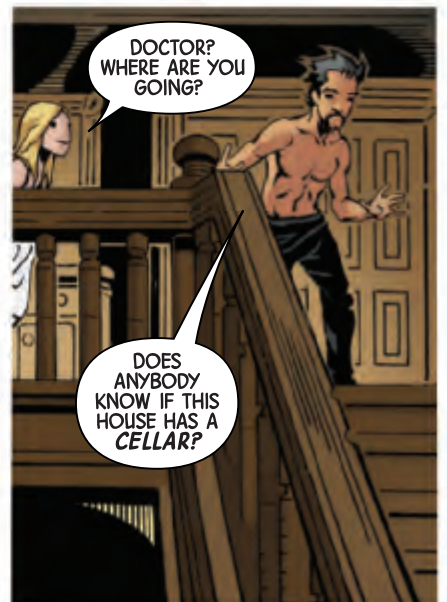


THOSE SOUND LIKE **TERRIBLE** STORIES TO ME. I THINK YOU'VE JUST HAD TOO MUCH WINE.

COME BACK TO BED.



SCARY THINGS.



DOCTOR? WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

DOES ANYBODY KNOW IF THIS HOUSE HAS A CELLAR?



DOCTOR...WE  
ALREADY HAVE  
PLENTY OF WINE  
UPSTAIRS.

AT MY LAST  
HOUSE...THERE WAS  
SOMETHING ABOUT  
THE CELLAR IN MY  
LAST HOUSE.

THERE'S  
NOTHING HERE.  
WHY DON'T WE  
GO BACK TO--

I CAN'T  
REMEMBER EVER  
BEING SCARED. FOR  
MY WHOLE ENTIRE  
LIFE.

I'VE NEVER  
SEEN ANYTHING  
MOVING IN THE  
SHADOWS. NEVER SEEN  
A FACE STARING BACK  
AT ME FROM THE  
DARKNESS.

AS FAR  
AS I KNOW,  
I'VE NEVER ONCE  
EXPERIENCED  
SOMETHING I  
COULDN'T  
EXPLAIN.

DON'T YOU  
THINK THAT'S...  
THAT'S...



WHY CAN'T  
I THINK OF A WORD  
THAT MEANS THE OPPOSITE  
OF NORMAL? THOSE WORDS  
DO EXIST, DON'T THEY?

DOCTOR,  
COME BACK  
TO BED.



IT'S JUST A CELLAR.  
THERE'S NOTHING HERE  
TO BE AFRAID OF.

I  
KNOW.

THAT'S  
WHAT I'M  
AFRAID OF.